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ON ORIGIN OF "PAZYRYK" RUG

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The origin of the rugweaving art has always been essential for researchers. This kind of textile, rich in various elements of ornamentation system, colour shades, technical and technological peculiarities, has always had its distinguished place among other cultural values, which mainly explains the great and continuous interest of researchers and the cultural world, in general, towards its origin. This intense attention began from the half of the 19th century and continues until now. Ancient rug specimens as well as written and representation sources are fundamental to this field.

Among ancient specimens of rugs known to specialists, the “Pazyryk” rug is exceptional. It was discovered in the tomb 5 of Pazyryk mound in Mountainous Altay. The rug has been left frozen in the tomb for about 2500 years. Thus, not having exposed to any external influence, it has actually reached our days unharmed. Besides, it is notable for its luxuriant ornamentation system, variety of colour tints and after all, gives a comprehensive idea about the rugweaving technology practiced 2500 years ago (Figure 1). At any rate, it is obvious that such a rug could have been woven only in the centres of civilizations with highly developed weaving traditions. In my opinion, this is the reason why the origin of the rug has become a matter of incessant disputes for more than fifty years.

S.I.Rudenko, who supervised the excavations, comparing the ornamentation elements of this specimen to the elements of the rugs and felts found in the neighbouring mound of Badashar, as well as considering its harmonious colour and pattern interpretations, already at that time considered Pazyryk rug to be of the Near East origin.¹ According to his investigation results he stated: ”Among the large number of patterns known to us which are characteristic of the peoples of Mountainous Altay, there are not ones similar to the patterns of this rug”.²

Obviously, the rug’s ornamentation details and general principles of presentation are in accordance with Assyrian, Babelonian, early Armenian and Achaemenide traditions. The cavalrymen’s costumes and the modes of their representation, the structure of the field of the rug, the colour interpretations are closely related to the Assyrian and Babelonian wall paintings and mosaics dating to the same century.³ Many researchers agree with S. Rudenko on ground of their additional arguments.

Particularly, Robert Pinner⁴, Ulrich Schurmann⁵ and others share this opinion who, as a source, signify also the rug resembling mosaics in the palace halls of the kings

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¹ **S. I. Rudenko.** Ancient artistic rugs and fabrics of the world. Moscow, 1968. p. 55.

² Idem, p.49:

³ **Z.A. Rogozin.** Ancient History of the East- History of the Halds from Prehistoric Timesto the Dominance of Assyria. 1902, p.74-77: #

⁴ **Robert Pinner.** The Earlist Carpets-Hali, 1982, vol.5, n.2, p.111-114:

⁵ **Ulrich Schurmann.** Der Pazyryk. Seine Deutungund Herkunft, New York-Mannheim, 1982:

Sinnakherib and Assurbanipal dating to the 7th century B.C., discovered by Englishman Austin Leyard during the excavations of the royal palaces of Nineveh in 1847.

Rug specialist Joseph Mcmillan who has had the opportunity to examine the rug for a couple of hours at the Hermitage Museum in 1957, believes it to have been woven in Achaemenide Persia. Although the same author considers the images of elks depicted on the inner border of the rug to be elements characteristic of the Scythian culture.⁶ He substantiates this assumption by the fact that these animals lived in Siberia and northern parts of Europe.

Rug specialists of Iran⁷ also consider “Pazyryk” to be one of the early specimens of Persian rugs.⁷ Several investigators, in particular the above mentioned Ulrich Schurmann, Volkmar Gantzhorn and others believe that this rug was woven in the Kingdom of Van and is related to the Armenian culture. V. Ganzhorn, to confirm his assumption, has compared the Phrygian, Assyrian and Babelonian, early Armenian or Urartian primary sources of applied-decorative art to the technological features of the rug, particularly the fact of its having been woven with a symmetrical knot. He also considered the presence of rug fragments and corresponding tools which provide evidence about the ancient rugweaving traditions in the Armenian Highland. In terms of the origin of the rug, another group of investigators brings forth the Altay hypothesis.⁸

In particular, Prof. Neyatt Diyarbekirli of Istanbul University considers that the ornamentation details and style of the rug are typical of the Turkish and Oguz tribes of Central Asia.⁹ Some others give preference to the Chinese and Monghol cultural background. Several specialists of oriental rug have placed their assumptions on the “spongobongo” web site (e.g. Michael Wendorf, John Owen, Jack Wagner and others). According to them the rug may be either of Altay, that is of Turkish or of Chinese - Monghol, Tibetan, Persian or Kurdish origin.¹⁰ As for John Owen, he is sure that the rug was woven by Kurds.¹¹

Not considering the said statements groundless, the author finds it strange that these specialists, consider U. Schurmann’s and V. Gantzhorn’s opinions regarding the fact that “Pazyryk” was woven in the vicinity of the basin of lake Van and is a part of the Armenian culture, not serious and “emotional”.¹²

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⁶ **Joseph McMillan** <http://www.spongobongo.com/her_9902.htm:
⁷ See e.g. **M. Javad Nassiri**. The Persian Carpet, Napoli, 2002, p.:
⁸ **V. Gantzhorn**. Le Tapis Chretien Oriental, Koln, 1991,p.48-52:
⁹ **N. Diyarbekirli**. New Light on the Pazyryk Carpet. (Translated from Turkish by Alan Mclaart)-Hali, London, 1978,vol.1, No 3, pp. 216-221:
¹⁰ www.tcoletribalrugscom/article Singapore Power Pt.html:
¹¹ Idem:
¹² www.tcoletribalrugscom/articleSingapore Power Pt.html:

It is not clear why just this viewpoint (concerning the origin of the rug) is considered to be inadmissible or “emotional” by M. Wandorf, J. Wagner, J. Owen and others.¹³ Meanwhile, they believe this rug to undoubtedly be Kurdish, that is woven by the inhabitants of Media. As it has been mentioned before, this version may also not be excluded but still it is not true to altogether deny Gantzorn, Schurmann and others who, regarding the existing arguments, suppose that the rug may be of Armenian origin.

These issues need some further demonstration. It is common knowledge among researchers that rugweaving art is of nomadic origin, characteristic of nomadic mode of life, as originated and developed in the East and has been introduced into Central Asia by Seljuks in the 11-12th centuries. In the opinion of the outstanding follower of this theory K. Erdman “Pazyryk” rug was woven by the inhabitants of West *Turkestan*, that is the ancestors of Seljuks.¹⁴

The followers of this theory persistently disregard the antique, Byzantine, Armenian and Arab written primary sources, as well as remains of rugs and carpets discovered during the excavations which bear witness to the presence of the rugweaving art in the Near East and, in particular, in the Armenian Highland. Instead, they continue to develop the Seljuk hypothesis of the origin of rugweaving in the area and attach dominant role to nomadic tribes. As a result, it is concluded that if even “Pazyryk” has been woven in the Near East, it must have been woven by tribes leading a nomadic way of life.¹⁵ This is, in fact, the aim pursued by these researchers.

The physical and chemical structure of rugs and textile, in general, is easily dilapidated under unfavourable conditions. Besides, rugs are not fireproof. Hence, the textile specimens dating to ancient times are extremely rare. Apart from “Pazyryk”, being a result of a lucky chance, only carbonized fragments are unearthed. Although, they can not bear witness to the peculiarities of rugs and textile of the given period, particularly concerning their ornamentation system, nevertheless, are exceptional sources for the investigation of their origin as well as for revealing their technical and technological distinctions. A great amount of textile specimens and particularly tools and implements relating to weaving, discovered in the Armenian Highland, give us clear evidence to conclude that this area is one of the cradles of the formation of rugweaving art.¹⁶ In this respect, weaver’s tools, especially the primitive implement and supplementary tools¹⁷ for rugweaving dating to the

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¹³ [tcoletribalrugs.com/articleSingapore Power Pt.html](http://tcoletribalrugs.com/articleSingapore%20Power%20Pt.html):
¹⁴ **K.Erdman**. Der orientalische Knupteppiche, p.13-16: #
¹⁵ [www.tcoletribalrugs.com/articleSingapore Power Pt.html](http://www.tcoletribalrugs.com/articleSingapore%20Power%20Pt.html):
¹⁶ See **A.Pogossyan**. On Origin of Rugweaving in Armenia, *Historico-Philological Journal*, No 2, 2001, pp. 236-250.
¹⁷ **S.A. Yesayan**. Ancient Culture of the tribes of North Eastern Armenia in the 3-2nd Millenia B.C., Yerevan,

3-2nd millennia B.C. which were discovered at the ancient settlements of Armenia (Teghut, Shresh blur, Shengavit, Artik tomb valley, etc.) as well as the carpet scraps¹⁸ dating to the 13-12th centuries B.C. found in the Haritj tomb valley are of great importance.

Taking into consideration these facts, researchers and particularly Prof. S.Yesayan state that there were required technical and technological skills¹⁹ as well as raw material resources ²⁰ in the Armenian Highland for the development of rugweaving art. This statement is further confirmed by textile fragments found at Late Bronze and early Armenian settlements of Armenia. A.S.Verkhovskaya, the first investigator and publisher of the fragment of a rug and other textile fabrics discovered during the excavations at Karmir Blur (adjacent to Yerevan) in 1953-55, emphasized the high quality and delicacy of their completion and thus, came to conclusion that in the 8-7th centuries B.C. in the territory of the Kingdom of Van, including the Ararat valley, there existed highly developed traditions of weaving, particularly rugweaving and embroidery.²¹ Of course, there were raw material resources for the origination and development of these branches. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that zoologist S.K. Dall, investigating the materials discovered at Karmir Blur found out that long and delicate fleeced sheep were raised in the Ararat valley in the 7-6th centuries B.C.²² Generally speaking, Assyrian cuneiform sources provide sufficient information regarding the early period of weaving. There are records concerning raw material acquisition and craftsmen who were in charge of processing, spinning, dying and weaving. At this period of time in big cities existed workshops and dying houses to provide necessary garments, covers, spreads and other similar goods for the royal palace, noblemen, big cult temples. It is known that the craftsmen working there received the required raw material and fulfilled exact orders under the control of supervisors.²³

This, probably, was typical of cities. A cuneiform inscription found at Rusahinili (Toprakh Kala) witnesses that there were 68 weavers among the members of the fortress

1976, pp. 208-210.
¹⁸ **T.S. Khatchatryan.** Ancient Culture of Shirak, Yerevan, 1975, pp. .200-201,254. Idem-Necropolis of Artik, p.176. #

¹⁹ **S.A. Yesayan.** The same publication, pp. 209-210. #

²⁰ **G. Ghapantsyan.** Hayasa-Cradle of Armenians, Yerevan, 1947, pp. 28,30. **V. Khatchatryan.** The Eastern provinces of the Hittite Empire, Yerevan, 1971, pp. 44,70,75. **N. Harutyunyan.** Agriculture and cattle-breeding of Urartu, Yerevan, 1964, pp. 151-196.

²¹ See- **T.S. Khatchatryan.** Ancient Culture of Shirak, Yerevan, 1975, p. 251. **A.S. Verkhovskaya.** Textile articles from the excavations at Karmir Blur- Karmir Blur, III, Results of the excavations of 1951-1953, Yerevan, 1955, p. 67. These items are kept in the State Museum of History of Armenia, the article from Harich is No 2113/6013 and the article from Karmir Blur is No 2051/39.

²² **S.K. Dall.** Results of the investigation of mammals from the excavations of the Urartian city of Teyshebaini, Academy of sciences of ASSR, Reference book N 1, 1952, p. 82.

²³ **A.A. Martirosyan.** Weavers of Ean Monastery in Uruk, New Babelonian period, Ancient East 5, Bulletin of Academy of sciences of ASSR, Institute of Eastern Studies, Yerevan, 1988, pp. 27-40: #

garrison.²⁴ It becomes clear from the records of the primary sources that Assyria preferred to import ready-made textile, while its successor Babylon, besides ready-made textile also imported yarn and dyes for local weaving.²⁵ Although the Assyrian-Babylonian sources known to us do not provide precise information about the countries of origin of the textile imported to Assyria, nevertheless, the existence of river trade with Armenia mentioned by Herodotus makes it possible to presume that similar goods were imported also from Armenia where, according to the same source, sheepbreeding was highly developed.²⁶ The Armenian Highland was rich in natural dyes among which the well known dye called “Armenian” mentioned by Strabo, Pliny the Elder, Procopius of Kaiseri.²⁷

In general, data relating to textile, accomplishing other spheres of historico-cultural system (architecture, fine arts, applied art, beliefs, etc.), show that these areas had stable relations and formed a single cultural unity in terms of policy as well as economy. Hence, the aboved mentioned data concerning Assyria are quite typical of the neighbouring countries, particularly of Armenia. Obviously, all these opinions are in accordance with those of Schurmann and Gantzhorn which provide convincing evidence to assuredly conclude that this rug was woven at the basin of lake Van and is related to Armenians. For further confirmation there is an additional argument regarding the technological side of it which is of great importance in relation to the origin of the rug. The chemists and dye specialists of the Hermitage Museum found out that the red colour of the rug’s threads (weft) is derived from the “cochineal” dye of the Ararat valley.²⁸ The factor of a “ssymetrical” knot, already mentioned by Rudenko and others, including Joseth McMillan who had eyewitnessed the rug, is also considered essential by us. This kind of knot is known as “Armani baff”, that is “Armenian work” in several rug weaving centres of Iran.²⁹

This evidence is important in relation to the fact that the knots of the rug remnants discovered in the neighbouring tombs of Bashadar are “assymetrical” or of “Seneh” type,³⁰ whereas the rug fragments discovered at Karmir Blur and dating to the 7-6th centuries B.C.

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²⁴ **I.M. Dyakonov.** On several trends in Urartian linguistics and new Urartian texts. *Ancient East*, 5, Bulletin of Academy of Sciences of ASSR, Institute of Eastern Studies, Yerevan, 1988, p. 168:

²⁵ *Idem*, p. 30:

²⁶ **Herodotus.** *History of Nine Books*, Translated from the original by **S. Krkyasharyan**, Yerevan, 1966, pp. 79-80, 305:

²⁷ **Strabo.** Collected and translated by H. Acharyan, Yerevan, 1940, p. 24. **H. Manandyan.** *Survey of the Armenian History*, vol. B, part A, Yerevan, 1957, pp. 399-400. *Idem*, *Cities in Armenia in the 10-11th centuries*, *Selected works*, vol. Z, Yerevan, 1985, pp. 335-336. **Procopius of Kaiseri.** *Byzantine sources*, Translation from the original by H. Bartikyan, Yerevan, 1961, p. 76: #

²⁸ **A.S. Gavrilenko, R. B. Rumyantseva, D.N. Glebovskaya.** *Application of thin-layered chromatography and electronic spectroscopy for the analysis of the dyes of ancient fabrics:*

Examination, conservation and restoration of ethnographical artifacts, Theses of a report, Riga, 1987, pp.17-18.

²⁹ **M. Javad Nassiri.** *The Persian Carpet*, Napoli, 2002, p. 25:

³⁰ **S.I. Rudenko**, the same publication, pp. 48-49, Plates 36-37:

are also woven with a symmetrical knot.³¹ Apart from technical and technological aspects, the major ornamentation elements and the principles of their presentation are another argument of great importance to prove the Armenian origin of the rug. These aspects were pointed out by the above mentioned investigators, especially V. Gantzhorn. In particular, referring to the origin and spread of the main composition of the rug field, that is the floralized cross motif (Figure 2), he has presented a similar specimen from the wall paintings attributed to the cultural environment of Asia Minor, in particular, to Phrygian tribes.³² This motif was typical of the Armenian medieval art, particularly to miniature. The ones depicted in the Gospels created in Vaspurakan in 1590 and in Talashu monastery in 1018 may serve as examples (Figures 3,4,5).³³ In relation to rugs, this motif is vividly depicted in the ornamentation system of “Djraberd” type rugs as a constituent part of the major radiant composition (Figure 6). This motif is the main composition (Figure 7) of the ornamentation system of another type of rugs classified under “Kusapat” category.

All the above mentioned statements and arguments make it possible to link the origin of “Pazyryk” to the Armenian cultural activities and conclude that it must have been woven in the areas stretching from North Mesopotamia to the basins of lakes Van and Urmia. Given the fragments of the carpet and the rug discovered in the Artik tomb valley and Karmir Blur respectively as well as the “Pazyryk” itself, bear evidence that in their majority, material items referring to the origin of the rugweaving art are directly connected with historical Armenia.

The Armenian and foreign sources testifying to the early traditions of rugweaving art in historical Armenia are many in number.

Xenophon mentions about rugs relating to Armenia and adjacent areas, dating to the 5-4th centuries B.C.³⁴ The Roman historian Takite writes in the 1st century A.D. about the heavy and piled rugs of Artashat, thus, recording the traditions of the previous centuries as well as their development process.³⁵ Weaving traditions which existed in Armenia and the neighbouring countries in the 2-1st millennia B.C. extended into the Middle ages. It is noteworthy, that traditions, originated in the previous millennia, continue in the trade and economic relation system between Armenia and Mesopotamia. Especially Arab sources provide historical and cultural important data. For example, Arab annalist of the 9th century

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³¹ A.S. Verkhovskaya, the same publication, p. 67:
³² See V. Gantzhorn, the same publication, p. 49, figure 42:
³³ See **Armenian Manuscript Ornamentation Painting, Compiled by L. Durnovo, preface by M. Sargsyan**, Yerevan, 1978, plates 11,92:
³⁴ **Xenophon**. Kyropedia, Translation from the Greek origin and references by **S. Krkyasharyan**, Yerevan, 2001, p. 185, Idem, Anabassys, pp. 173-174:
³⁵ **Takite**, p. 61:

Abu Bakr-al Jahiz recorded that felts, saddles, rugs, delicate mats, belts, wool were imported to Baghdad from Armenia and Aterpatakan.³⁶ Along with this, as recorded by Ahmad ibn al-Yakubi in the 10th century, wool was imported to Armenia from Mesopotamia to be spinned and used for different textile.³⁷ Armenian rugs were considered to be parts of the furnishing of royal courts and palace houses in Baghdad and not only there.³⁸ In the 9-13th centuries Armenian rugs were widely known in the East, from Egypt to Central Asia. According to Arab sources, Armenian rugs were most preferred in the market of Cairo.³⁹ This statement is confirmed by the record of Arab annalist as-Saalibi, according to which Armenian rugs were the most expensive in the Khalifate.⁴⁰ The rugs were highly appreciated in Central Asia, particularly in Khorasan and among the Bulgarians of Volga.⁴¹ The latter is a remarkable case. The thing is that in 922 Arab Ambassador Ahmad ibn-Fadlan reached the capital of Bulgarians of Volga and wrote from there that the floor of the king's tent was completely covered with rugs and there were Armenian rugs among them.⁴²

This means that Armenian rugs had certain peculiarities of colour and ornamentation system which distinguished them from rugs woven in other rugweaving centres and were guarantees of high price and demand. It was common practice to qualify other rugs in comparison to the Armenian ones.⁴³ It is worth mentioning, that in the 12-14th centuries from the ports of Cilicia many Armenian rugs were exported to European countries and since then the word “carpet”, denoting rug, was adopted by several European languages.⁴⁴ The above mentioned statements are clear evidence of the fact that in the Middle ages Armenia retained its leading role in the textile trade of the area. The rug was highly estimated and was the most peculiar among other textile artifacts. In our days it continues to be a cultural value of high rate and special significance. Taking into consideration all the above mentioned facts, we do not think Schurmann's and Gantzhorn's opinions regarding the origin of the rug to be emotional.

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³⁶ Foreign Sources on Armenia and Armenians, 16. Arab Sources, III, Arab Annalists, 9-10th centuries (Introduction and translation from the original by **Aram Ter-Ghevondyan**), Yerevan, 2005, p. 428, (Hence, Aram Ter-Ghevondyan, Arab Sources);
³⁷ **Ahmad Ibn Al-Yakubi**. A Book of Kingdoms, SMOMPK, issue 32, p. 59:
³⁸ **A. Mets**. p. 369:
³⁹ Idem:
⁴⁰ Idem:
⁴¹ **Abul Fazl Baykhaki**., Tarikh-i-Baykhaki. Materials on History of Turkmen and Turkmenistan, vol. 1, p. 238 (Translation edited by A.A. Romaskevitch). **V.V. Bartold**. Turkmenistan in the area of Monghol Invasion, Essays, vol. 1, Moscow, pp. 345-346:
⁴² Voyage of **Ibn Fadlan** on Volga, the same publication, p. 73: #
⁴³ See **A. Mets**. p. 369, **Aram Ter-Ghevondyan**, Arab Sources, pp. 361, 599:
⁴⁴ **Ghevond Alishan**. Sysakan, Venice, St. Lazzaro, 1893, pp. 436,441:

In relation to the judgement why the rug must be of nomadic origin we have several remarks:

a) **On nomadic way of life.** In terms of the origin of rugweaving art and this rug, in particular, preference is given to nomadic tribes. In the opinion of a large number of researchers, sheepbreeding is considered to be an essential factor as it provides raw material required for rugweaving. It is also accepted that rug is relevant for nomads in their everyday life as a means to replace coarse animal hides with thick and warm textile.⁴⁵ Thus, there exists two main points in terms of relating rugweaving art to nomadic tribes: abundance of required raw material (wool) and demand for warm and soft textile under cold climatic conditions. These statements cannot claim to be sufficient to make serious conclusions, for:

a) Required raw material (not only wool but also cotton, hemp, silk) was sufficient also with settled socialities. Moreover, they had the required dyes, wool processing skills and permanent settlements (the principal factor) which meant also corresponding manufacturing constructions.

b) Actually, the rug is not only a means of warmth and softness. In this respect, indisputably, sheepwool and animal hide are more available for nomads. Of course, this does not mean that nomads do not need piled textile but, still, it is not a convincing reason to attach a dominant role to nomads regarding the origin of rugweaving art. Meantime, many are the arguments to refuse this approach. Some of them we have already mentioned in our previous studies.⁴⁶

The earliest evidence belongs to Xenophon who records the conversation between Kyros and one of the governor-general's of Northern Mesopotamia Gobryas. Eager to know who of them both has more rugs he addresses to Gobryas and receives the following response: "I am sure you have more rugs and beds, your house is larger than mine, for the Heaven and the Earth are your home. Your bed is the place where you can lie on the ground. For you rug is not the sheepwool but all that mountains and fields produce".⁴⁷ Undoubtedly, here the nomadic and settled modes of life are meant. The Assyrian governor-general by his response to Kyros, 2500 years ago denied the above mentioned theory, originated at the end of the 19th century. Of course, he is not the only one and has his followers. Here is another evidence belonging to Panah Khan's vizier bard Vaghyf who was well informed about the everyday life of nomads:

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⁴⁵ See details on www.tcoletribulrugs.com/articleSingapore PowerPt.html

⁴⁶ See **A. Poghosyan**. On the Origin of Rugweaving Art in Armenia, p. 24:

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⁴⁷ **Xenophon**, p. 185:

If beauty's waist is delicate like glaze,
She deserves not loom but henna,
Nomad is homeless, has no abode
Can she reconcile forever?...⁴⁸

(Translated from Armenian by A.A.)

Almost the same opinion was expressed by Turkish historian Javad Pasha who lived in the same century. Writing about Turks who have established an Armenian community in Anapa, he mentions: "...if there are no christian rayas in the neighbourhood, it will be difficult to arrange necessary matters".⁴⁹

There is one more observation relating to the last quarter of the 19th century. The famous French geographer Elise Reclieu writes about Armenian's activities: "There is not a single house in Van velayat which is not built with the hands of Armenians, a single local fabric, not woven with their fingers, hardly a single kind of fruit may be found, not grown in their orchards".⁵⁰

The economic survey of the areas from where Armenians were expelled shows the same results. For example, the statistic survey, carried on in former rugweaving centres of present Azerbaijan in 1925-26, reveal that after the eviction of Armenians in 1918-20 once famous rugweaving centres of Shamakhi, Gyoktcha, Aghdam, Nukhi and Zakatala stopped functioning.⁵¹ The same situation existed in Shushi. The well known expert of Transcaucasian manufacture A.S. Pyralov in his article "Manufacturing industries of the Transcaucasian Republics" writes: "At the end of the 19th century Shushi was a rugweaving centre. There gathered major exporters and weavers of highest taste whose products were exported to Western Europe, in particular, to England".⁵² The statistic survey of 1925-27 show that after the eviction of Armenians in 1920, in the city which once had a population of more than 40,000 people and was known as a cultural and economic centre, in 1926 only 5107 muslims lived, economy was insignificant and even musical instruments like saz, tar and kyamantcha were rarely made.⁵³

The further deterioration of rugweaving brought to a rude technological mistake. Because of the wrong reverse order of the thin and thick weft which was to pass through,

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⁴⁸ **L. Kerimov.** Azerbaijani Rugs, vol. 3, Baku, 1983, p. 121:

⁴⁹ **Jevdet Pasha,** Tarikhi Djevdet. "The Turkish sources about Armenia, Armenians and other peoples of the Transcaucasus", translation by S. Safrastian, vol. I, Yerevan, 1961, pp. 275-276:

⁵⁰ **Michael Varandean.** Prehistory if the Armenian Movement, vol. 1-2, Jeneva, 1912, pp. 146-147:

⁵¹ **V.N. Khudadov.** Transcaucasia, Historico-Economic Review, Edited by M.P.Pavlovitch, Moscow-Leningrad, 1926, p. 140:

⁵² **G. Seyran.** The Economic Life of Karabagh and its Perspectives (Economic geography), Tiflis, 1928, p.66-69, 72. **A.S. Pyralov.** Manufacturing Industry of Transcaucasian Republics. Transcaucasia, Collection of articles on Statistics and Economy, Tiflis, 1925 (Cited in G. Seyran's publication, p. 67):

⁵³ **G. Seyran,** the same publication, pp. 72, 95:

after each row of knots, thousands of rugs woven in Azerbaijan were regarded defective in those years. Only in 1930s, with newly opened rugweaving schools and trained specialists began the new era of rugweaving.⁵⁴

One more evidence: in the years of the First World War, Raffaello Nogales, a volunteer and an active participant of military actions in the regular Turkish army, in July of 1915 being in Tigranakert, among other noteworthy observations, mentions that the crafts and trade in Tigranakert were developed owing to the lively activities of Armenians and therefore after their extermination and exile “the markets were empty and the production of leather, rugs, wool and silk was completely dissolved”.⁵⁵

Another evidence relating to 1915. Since 1897 the rug-weaving fabric “Mazpane”, founded by Frantz Eckart - a representative of the German missionary – was acting in Urfa. The fabric was named so after the Armenian district of the city called “Masmane”. Bruno Eckart, Frantz Eckart’s younger brother, who was an eyewitness of the events happened to the Armenians of Urfa, mentions in his memoirs that 250 Armenian female weavers were working there.⁵⁶ The author of the memoirs writes that in October-November of 1915 the Turks exiled them to Syria and with that “the German production and preaching came to an end in Urfa”.⁵⁷

Thus, the German entrepreneur has not found it profitable to continue his business in a region inhabited completely with Muslims and tribes continuing to lead nomadic way of life. In all these cases, Armenians, as leading a settled way of life on one hand and various nomadic tribes of Turkmen origin, leading a nomadic way of life on the other hand are actually meant. So on what ground do the “investigators” connect the origin of the rugweaving art with the nomadic way of life? In fact, there is no reason.

Merely, among some of the investigators of rugweaving art there was and still is such a groundless desire.

The aim of this report is not a detailed examination of the Armenian rugweaving centres, their history and rugs typical of them. But what is said is sufficient for those who are interested in these problems, to realize the significant role of Armenians in the sphere of rugweaving art. In fact, a great amount of weighty arguments, due to the fundamental work by Volkmar Gantshorn, are well known since long ago but, nevertheless, a big group of investigators disregard them. It seems that a part of the researchers are completely

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⁵⁴ See: **Kerimov**, “Azerbaijani Carpet”, vol. 2, pp. 54-55:
⁵⁵ **Raffaello De Nogales**, “Four years under the crescent”. Moscow, “Russian Herald”, 2006, p. 108: #
⁵⁶ **Bruno Eckart**. “The days I lived in Urfa”, Potsdam, 1922, /Translation from German by A. Gasparyan, the introduction, commentaries, edition and publication by J. Avetisyan/ Yerevan, 1990, pp. 6, 15, 19:
⁵⁷ **Bruno Eckart**, the mentioned work, p. 47:

unaware of these facts and some of them seem not to consider them seriously / Michail Wandorf, John Owen, Jack Wagner etc./⁵⁸

b. About the so called “Nomadic” rugs. The primary sources provide sufficient information regarding another important problem: the factual origin of the majority of the cultural values, including rugs which have become the property of not native Muslim tribes of Asia Minor who led a settled or nomadic way of life. In this respect, Bruno Eckart writes about the widespread pillage during the period following the extermination and forced exile: “in the city as well as in the vicinity of it, in the duration of long months, plundered goods were on sale. Of course, the valuable part of the pillage was taken by the government and every day the artifacts were sold by auctions at astonishingly low prices and exceptionally sold to the Turks. In due course the property of the Armenians was passed on to Muslims and thus they reached their main goal of extermination of the Armenian population”.⁵⁹

Nogales has noteworthy observations to this respect. He writes: “the common arches and rows of columns of the main mosque ‘Ulu-Jami’, in Tigranakert, extremely differ from other mosques decorated with splendid bas-reliefs. The northern facade of the mosque is different too, which is completely plated with marble and white stone, which are consistent of engraved inscriptions. Moreover, the inscriptions at the upper part are older than the ones at the bottom, though, actually, it should be on the contrary. Such strange inscriptions are also on the towers of the fortress. Though on some of them the bas-reliefs of the stone emblems of two-headed eagle, the symbol of ancient Armenia are still preserved, but the sublime inscriptions on the walls attribute these constructions to the Kurdish and Turkmen rulers. Nevertheless, I think that the basalt slabs of the lower row are replaced by similar marble slabs on which the false records are engraved. It is possible that in this way the sultans and the Muslim rulers wanted to remain in the history as founders of cities and fortresses, though actually they have only stolen the glory of the others”.⁶⁰ This judgement of the author completely corresponds to the long-range policy of the Seljuk-Turkish tribes, settled in this region in the 11–12th centuries, about whom Turkish historian Javad Pasha, based on the primary sources studied by him, writes: “Seljuk Melik Shah, following the example of his ancestors, for the safety of the captured territories, settled numerous Turkish tribes in the territory of Anatolia as well as from the borders of Georgia up to the sea of the Khaz”.⁶¹ That is, the Seljuks have already started to realize the process of appropriation of

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⁵⁸ www.tcoletribalrugs.com/articleSingapore Power Pt.html: #
⁵⁹ Bruno Eckart, the mentioned work, pp. 57-58:
⁶⁰ Idem, p. 107:
⁶¹ Jevdet. Pasha pp 251-252:

the historical-cultural values of the captured territories as well as the property of the natives. These purposeful and intentional plans were to be continued in the coming centuries, accomplishment of which was the Great Armenian Genocide organized by the Young Turks in 1915. Here is another observation from the memoirs of Nogales concerning the situation created after the genocide. At the end of 1917 being on service in Tigranakert, he wrote: “Almost nothing is changed in Diyarbekir. Instead of the massacred Armenian population, Turks and Kurds, escaped from the eastern regions have settled down here. From the flat and earthen roofs of the houses of the city, the narrow streets, running in different directions, are seen. Along them, huge constructions are standing made of dark material, decorated with ornamented Armenian weavings...”⁶² As we see, two - three years later Armenian weavings still existed in the city but without their manufacturers. The witnesses testify that before reaching to Deir-El-Zor, to the present border of last time. Zapel Yesayan tells that in order to understand the value of the goods he had bought, the head of the village Tjarablus showed her a great amount of various goods: rugs, embroidery, curtains, silverware, copper utensils etc., on some of which there were specks of blood.⁶³ It is not strange that the goods were purchased by the head of the village because, as Bruno Eckart informs, they were sold by auctions at symbolic prices only to the Turks. In June of 1917 Bruno Eckart, being in Ras-el-Ayn in one of the railway stations adjacent to Baghdad, as an employee of the railway company of Baghdad, in one of the Circassian villages, had an opportunity to witness the life conditions of the exiled Armenians. He writes: “I have seen the Circassian huts with my own eyes, full of Armenians’ property. As everywhere in the Turkish empire, here also Armenians have become the victims of the Turkish infinite greediness”.⁶⁴ The whole territory of the historical Armenia, in the duration of the 13-18th centuries, was a stage for various Turkmen tribes and afterwards for Turkish-Persian continuous wars. They were undoubtedly accompanied by pillages, in the result of which the Armenian cultural values, including also rugs, became the property of the aliens and their mosques. Periodic were the same events taken place from 1915 to 1922 in Tigranakert, Urfa and generally in big and small settlements of Western Armenia. In Diyarbekir velayat 124.000 Armenians lived before the extermination, whereas after it, according to the data of 192, only five hundred Armenians were present. Generally from 2.500.000 million Armenians living in Western Armenia and in the centres with Armenian population of Asia Minor only 25.000 Armenians remained. Moreover, in the velayats of Van, Bitlis, Erzerum and the above

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⁶² **Raffaello De Nogales**, pp. 339-340:
⁶³ **Yessayan Z.** “The agony of a nation”. Job, N2, Baku, 1917, p. 127:
⁶⁴ Idem, p. 62-63:

mentioned city of Urfa, according to the data of 1926 no Armenians were registered.”⁶⁵ Although, after the Genocide of the Armenians living in the western Armenia, a very small number of Armenians, mainly craftsmen, survived in some of the big cities of western Armenia, it is obvious that due to centuries long massacres and plundering ended by the Genocide, the Turks, Kurds and other Muslim tribes took possession of not only the territory of the historical Armenia but also the wealth of the millennia old cultural heritage. Thus, since the last quarter of the 19th century, due to the efforts of a big group of foreign orientalist and art critics, theories, ascribing cultural values to the Turkish tribes came into being which gave birth to the legends concerning the “nomadic” rug and the rugweaving art being spread by them in the Near East. No doubt, rugweaving art was not unknown to those tribes but it did not have the high level of development, the technical-technological and artistic characteristics typical of the rugs that were famous and were in great demand in the Eastern markets. It is worth mentioning two well-known evidences, as a confirmation of the above statement. In 911 Yusuf Abu-Saj, the emir of neighbouring Aterpatakan, in order to improve his relations with Muktedir Khalif, who treated him with animosity, presented him seven Armenian rugs among other gifts.⁶⁶ Armenian rugs were estimated as valuable gifts also in the countries far from Armenia. Particularly, at the beginning of the 11th century sultan Mahmud of Ghaznevid presented *an Armenian rug* and other rugs to Kadr Khan, the leader of the Turkmen tribes.⁶⁷ Armenian rugs were particularly mentioned in the list of the gifts of Sultan Mahmud’s son Massudi received from Suri, the governor of Khorasan.⁶⁸ In all these cases, no matter being near or far from Armenia, the donors were ruling over the countries having rich traditions of rugweaving art but when serious problems were to be solved they still gave preference to the Armenian rugs as presents. The presentation of this long information and observations of the investigators about the Armenian cultural activities and historical fate referring to different periods, based mainly on foreign sources, pursues two main reasons. First, to show those who do not know or pretend not to know, that the rugweaving art was well-known in historical Armenia and traditionally was characteristic of the Armenians. Second, to show that historical Armenia and the Armenian people may potentially be among the regions and ethnic groups where and who could have woven the “Pazyryk” rug. Hence, Ulrich Schurmann, Volkmar

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⁶⁵ About the number of Armenians in Western Armenia before and after the genocide see: **Loretta Gulian Boxdorfer**, The Ars data Bank of inscribed Armenian Rugs, - Rites of Passage in inscribed Armenian Rugs, Edited By Ejland L. Murray, San Francisco, 2002, p. 25:
⁶⁶ **N. Mar**, Ani, p. 237-238, see also A. Mets, the mentioned work, p. 369:
⁶⁷ **V.V.Bartold**, Turkestan in the epoch of the Mongolian invasion. Works, vol.1, Moscow, 1963, p. 345-346:
⁶⁸ **Abu-l Fazl Baykhaki, Tarikh-i-Baykhaki**. Translation edited by A.A. Romaskevitch. Materials on history of the Turkmen and Turkmenistan, vol.1, Arabic sources of 8-15cc. M.-L., 1939, p. 238:

Gantshorn and all those who, somehow, relate the origin of this rug to the Armenians, are neither emotional nor unaware of the available historical-cultural data and facts. Anyhow, they have not come to such an extraordinary conclusion as Michael Wandorf, stating that the rug and other thick felts found in the same tomb are woven by the same tribes, though it is evident that they have neither technological nor artistic resemblances with each other.⁶⁹The above narrated arguments allow us to conclude that one of the possible regions where “Pazyryk” rug could have been woven, is historical Armenia, particularly the basin of lake Van, where ethnic socialities leading a settled way of life lived. Thus, the Armenian provenance, given the evidences and factual testimonies may also be quite probable. Not accepting the hypothesis of the nomadic origin of the rug, I do not altogether deny other opinions based on the primary sources, taking into consideration the fact that at that period there existed several other rugweaving centres in the Near East and Asia Minor populated with ethnic socialities, able of creating such kinds of textile.

⁶⁹ www.tcoletribalrugs.com/articleSingapore Power Pt.html: